

Message Text

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ACTION AF-18

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FM AMEMBASSY KAMPALA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3003
INFO AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

C O N F I D E N T I A L KAMPALA 2657

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS PFOR UG UK

SUBJECT: BRITISH NATIONAL MURDERED, POSSIBLY BY UGANDAN
SECURITY SERVICES

1. SUMMARY. BRITISH NATIONAL JOHN HENRY LONGHURST, EMPLOYEE OF KENYA-BASED CONSTRUCTION FIRM, WAS FOUND BURNED ALMOST BEYOND RECOGNITION IN KENYA-REGISTERED VEHICLE EARLY ON MORNING OF 24 AUGUST. BURNED BODY OF UNIDENTIFIED AFRICAN WAS ALSO IN VEHICLE. BRITISH HIGH COMMISSION WAS NOTIFIED THAT LONGHURST HAD BEEN KILLED IN AN AUTOMOBILE ACCIDENT. SINCE AVAILABLE EVIDENCE INDICATES LONGHURST AND HIS COMPANION WERE FIRST MURDERED AND THEN BURNED IN THE CAR, BHC PLANS TO PROTEST AND DEMAND A THOROUGH INVESTIGATION IF OFFICIAL GOU POLICE REPORT MAINTAINS THAT DEATH OF LONGHURST RESULTED FROM AN AUTO ACCIDENT. END SUMMARY.

2. THE BODY OF A BRITISH RESIDENT OF UGANDA, JOHN HENRY LONGHURST, WAS FOUND BURNED ALMOST BEYOND RECOGNITION IN A KENYAN-REGISTERED VEHICLE DURING EARLY MORNING HOURS OF 24 AUGUST NEAR MAIN ENTRANCE OF MAKERERE UNIVERSITY. BODY OF AN UNIDENTIFIED AFRICAN WAS ALSO FOUND IN BACK SEAT OF SAME VEHICLE. OFFICIALS OF BRITISH HIGH COMMISSION (BHC) WERE NOTIFIED LATER IN MORNING OF 24 AUGUST THAT LONGHURST HAD BEEN KILLED IN AN AUTOMOBILE ACCIDENT. HOWEVER, WHEN AN OFFICIAL OF BHC VIEWED THE BODY IN
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THE VEHICLE, HE NOTED THAT THE VEHICLE HAD SUSTAINED NO DAMAGE

TO ITS EXTERIOR AND THE HAND BRAKE WAS IN LOCKED POSITION. BHC STRONGLY SUSPECTS THAT LONGHURST AND HIS UNIDENTIFIED AFRICAN COMPANION HAD BEEN MURDERED ELSEWHERE AND THEIR BODIES PLACED IN THE VEHICLE AND SET AFIRE. BHC OFFICIAL HAD ALSO SEEN SEVERAL BOTTLES WHICH HAD PROBABLY CONTAINED GASOLINE NEAR THE VEHICLE.

3. ANOTHER BHC OFFICIAL WAS PERMITTED TO PHOTOGRAPH LONGHURST'S BODY AT THE MORGUE BUT WAS REFUSED PERMISSION TO TAKE ANY PHOTOS OF THE VEHICLE. IF THE OFFICIAL UGANDAN POLICE REPORT MAINTAINS THAT LONGHURST WAS KILLED IN AN AUTOMOBILE ACCIDENT, BHC PLANS TO LODGE A STRONG PROTEST WITH GOU AND DEMAND THAT A THOROUGH INVESTIGATION BE CONDUCTED.

4. THIS INCIDENT HAS CAUSED CONSIDERABLE CONSTERNATION WITHIN THE FOREIGN COMMUNITY AND SPECULATION IS RUNNING HIGH AS TO HOW AND WHY LONGHURST WAS MURDERED. ONE STORY, WHICH IS REPORTEDLY BASED ON AN EYEWITNESS ACCOUNT, HAD LONGHURST PARKED IN HIS VEHICLE IN AN OPEN LOT NEAR THE WANDEGEYA CIRCLE AT APPROXIMATELY 2200 HOURS ON 23 AUGUST WHEN A VEHICLE OPERATED BY AN UNIDENTIFIED AFRICAN PARKED ABOUT 20 METERS AWAY. THE AFRICAN ENTERED LONGHURST'S VEHICLE AND THE TWO SAT CHATTING FOR ABOUT 15 MINUTES, AFTER WHICH THE AFRICAN RETURNED TO HIS VEHICLE AND DROVE AWAY. AT ABOUT 2230 HOURS, THE AFRICAN RETURNED IN HIS VEHICLE WITH ANOTHER AFRICAN PASSENGER. THEY ENTERED LONGHURST'S VEHICLE. A SHORT TIME LATER, TWO VEHICLES DROVE UP AND PARKED ON BOTH SIDES OF LONGHURST'S CAR AND THE OCCUPANTS WERE OBSERVED PUSHING LONGHURST AND THE TWO AFRICANS INTO THEIR CARS. THE "EYEWITNESS" ACCOUNT ENDS HERE. IT IS NOW BEING SPECULATED THAT LONGHURST WAS INVOLVED IN INTELLIGENCE ACTIVITIES AND HAD BEEN CAUGHT RED-HANDED BY UGANDAN MILITARY INTELLIGENCE AUTHORITIES. IT IS SURMISED THAT LONGHURST AND HIS TWO COMPANIONS WERE TAKEN TO ANOTHER SITE WHERE THEY WERE MURDERED. LONGHURST'S VEHICLE WAS LATER MOVED FROM THE WANDEGEYA AREA AND PARKED NEAR THE MAIN ENTRANCE OF MAKERERE UNIVERSITY WITH THE TWO BODIES INSIDE, AND THEN SET AFIRE. THE FATE OF THE THIRD PERSON IS NOT KNOWN.

5. ACCORDING TO THE BHC, LONGHURST WAS AN EMPLOYEE OF THE KENYAN-BASED MOWLEM CONSTRUCTION CO. AND WAS USING A COMPANY CAR AT THE TIME OF HIS DEATH. LONGHURST HAD SOMEWHAT OF AN UNSAVORY REPUTATION, WHICH MIGHT EXPLAIN HIS UNTIMELY DEATH. AN ARTICLE
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WHICH APPEARED IN THE NAIROBI PRESS REPORTED THAT LONGHURST AND AN AFRICAN COMPANION HAD BEEN INVOLVED IN A FIGHT EARLIER IN THE EVENING AT A NOTORIOUS ARMY HANGOUT, THE SUSANNAH NIGHT CLUB, NEAR MAKERERE. IT IS POSSIBLE THAT LONGHURST WAS MURDERED BECAUSE OF THIS ALTERCATION.

6. MUCH OF ABOVE INFO COMES FROM SENSITIVE SOURCES (MAINLY BHC) AND IT SHOULD THEREFORE BE PROTECTED.

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